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UNCLAS KATHMANDU 000252

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR CA/OCS/ACS/NESA JOHN PETERS AND SA/INS
GREG BAYER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: CASC PTER ASEC NP

SUBJECT: Nepal Wardens Message - Maoist Nationwide
Strike February 12

On February 6, Post disseminated the following security announcement to American citizens in Nepal via its warden network. Post had pre-cleared the message with OCS Desk Officer John Peters.

[Begin text]

This wardens message is being issued to alert Americans citizens about the Maoists' call for a nationwide "bandh" (forced closure of businesses, schools and vehicular traffic) for February 12. In addition, the Maoists reportedly are planning a longer-term program of demonstrations and bandhs affecting different parts of the country from February 8 through March 31. This message advises Americans to exercise heightened security precautions and to maintain a low profile during the days leading up to the February 12 bandh and throughout this period.

In the past, the Maoists have utilized bombings, assassinations and other acts of violence to intimidate and coerce observance of their forced bandh. Given the high level of pre-bandh violence and the unpredictability of these disturbances, American citizens are urged to exercise extra caution both during the lead-up to the proposed bandh and on bandh dates.

During the scheduled bandh, official Americans are advised to minimize non-essential travel. American citizens are urged to maintain a low profile throughout the bandh period, traveling as little as possible within or outside the Kathmandu Valley. Taxi and bus services may not be available. If you must travel, wait until a pattern of traffic is well-established. During past bandhs, a number of buses, taxis and trucks have been attacked.

Americans should also be aware that, in the past, Nepali authorities have imposed curfews on short notice for various areas, both within and outside Kathmandu. Often the areas affected by the curfew are not clearly defined. Outside the Kathmandu Valley, dusk to dawn curfews have been imposed in many districts. American citizens are advised to monitor evening media broadcasts closely for the latest curfew information and to respect the curfew restrictions.

For further information about bandhs, guidance on security measures to be followed in the lead up to and during bandhs, and information about security conditions in Nepal, American citizens are strongly encouraged to refer to the Consular Information Sheet for Nepal which may be found on the Department of State's home page at <http://travel.state.gov> and the American Embassy in Nepal's home page at <http://www.south-asia.com/USA>.

[End text]

Malinowski